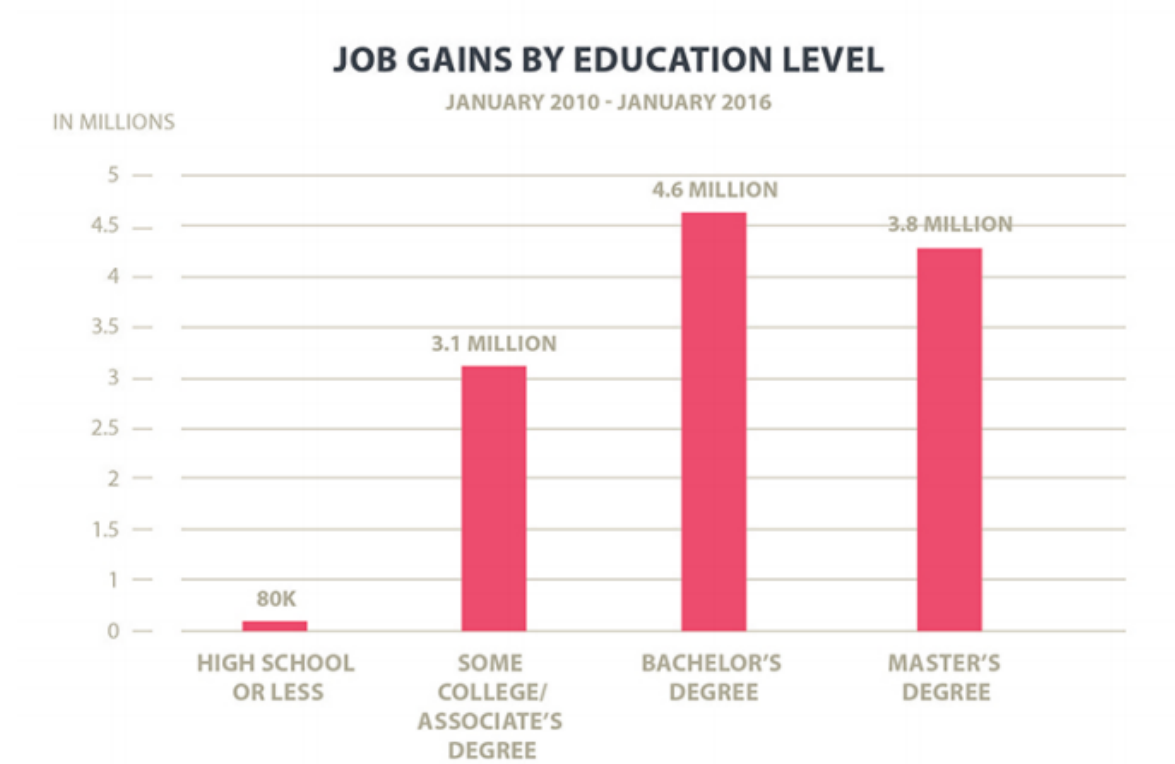


Breakthrough  
**EMPLOYER  
ENGAGEMENT**  
Practices



# GROWING DEMAND FOR EDUCATED WORKERS



Source: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce

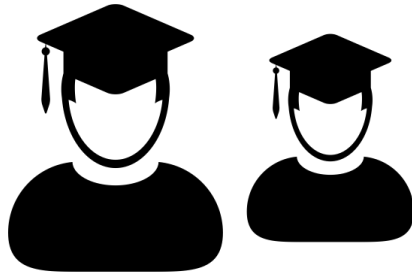
# GROWING DEMAND FOR STEM

▶ We will need **approximately 1 million more STEM professionals** than the U.S. will produce at the current rate over the next decade if the country is to retain its historical preeminence in science and technology.

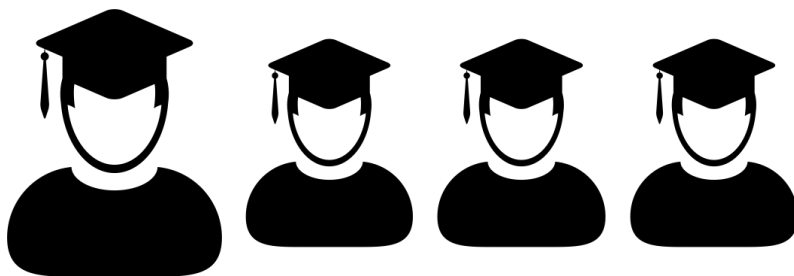
—President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology

## BUT A PERSISTENT DISCONNECT

- ▶ Nearly half (49%) of recent U.S. college graduates consider themselves underemployed, or in a job that does not require a college degree.



- ▶ In 2014, the U.S. Census Bureau reported that 74 percent of those who have a bachelor's degree in a STEM major are not employed in STEM occupations



“

“I know [how to] calculate how changing the diameter of pipes might change the pressure or speed of water inside, but I don't feel confident to build very much of anything.”

– 24-year old Mechanical Engineering graduate,  
McGill University

# THE PROBLEM

- ▶ Gap between what students learn in the **classroom** and what employers need in the **workplace**



# THE PROBLEM

- ▶ Few venues for long-term, strategic employer engagement
- ▶ Employer roles limited to narrow advisory functions
- ▶ Duplication in employer outreach efforts



# EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

## The Short Game

*Makes sense for some purposes but doesn't produce lasting results*

- ▶ Survey of needs
- ▶ Focus groups
- ▶ Single program advisory boards
- ▶ Sporadic engagement
- ▶ Employers in reactive role

## The Long Game

*Builds trust and relationships that yield long-term impact*

- ▶ Employers as full partners
- ▶ Shared stake in solutions
- ▶ Industry-led partnerships
- ▶ Sustained commitment
- ▶ Employers in proactive role

# WHAT MAKES IT HARD TO PLAY THE **LONG GAME**?

- ▶ **Fragmented** employer outreach
- ▶ Educators set the **agenda**
- ▶ Few opportunities for employers to find their **collective voice**
- ▶ The **right business leaders** are difficult to engage

# TABLE DISCUSSION

- Take stock of employer engagement efforts at your College
- Which of these are long-game and which are short-game?
- What are the strengths and limitations of each?

## The Short Game

- Survey of needs
- Focus groups
- Single program advisory boards
- Sporadic engagement
- Employers in reactive role

## The Long Game

- Employers as full partners
- Shared stake in solutions
- Industry-led partnerships
- Sustained commitment
- Employers in proactive role

WHAT'S AN **ALTERNATIVE**?

**MARICOPA  
COMMUNITY  
COLLEGE  
DISTRICT**



**MARICOPA  
COMMUNITY  
COLLEGES®**



# THE STARTING PLACE

- ▶ Largest community college district in the country serving ~130,000 students per year
- ▶ Recognized need to better align programs with the needs of industry sectors that have high demand for workers with STEM skills

# THE GOAL

- ▶ Develop a broader understanding of industry trends and developments
- ▶ Respond to industry needs with a coordinated approach across multiple colleges
- ▶ Leverage resources that strengthen colleges' ability to meet industry and student needs
- ▶ Coordinate outreach to external partners

# THE RESULT

- ▶ Business Industry Leadership Teams (BILTs)
  - ▷ Manufacturing
  - ▷ Health Care
  - ▷ IT
  - ▷ Advanced Business Services



# DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

- ▶ Agenda is led by industry
- ▶ Complementary roles with advisory boards
- ▶ Alignment with broader regional industry engagement efforts
- ▶ Faculty weighed in early on

# WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

## ▶ For Businesses

- ▶ Ability to impact programming beyond individual programs or colleges;
- ▶ A more comprehensive approach to strengthening the talent pipeline with a bigger return on investment.

## ▶ For Colleges

- ▶ Real-time, highly accurate information on industry trends and workforce needs, which keeps programs relevant and up-to-date;
- ▶ New, deeper partnerships with industry to provide work-based learning and other;
- ▶ Better understanding of how various programs fit together to address industry needs.

## ▶ For Students

- ▶ Industry and career information that would otherwise be difficult to find;
- ▶ More opportunities to interact with employers;
- ▶ Greater confidence that educational experience will lead to successful careers.

# WHAT DOES IT TAKE?

1. Make the case for a “long game” approach
2. Take stock of existing employer engagement efforts and get on the same page about a new approach
3. Jointly target business leaders
  - Cultivate CEO champions
  - Make space for the employer voice to emerge
  - Listen, respond, iterate, repeat

Questions?

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